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NEXT SUNDAY LECTURE: { JEWISH AFFIRMATIONS.
vi. THE MESSIAH



JEWISH AFFIRMATIONS

iii. The Holy Bible.

A SUNDAY LECTURE

BEFORE

Congregation Rodeph Shalom

Eighth Street, near Penn Avenue

PITTSBURG, PA.

BY

RABBI J. LEONARD LEVY, D. D.

SERIES 2.

SUNDAY, JAN. 18, 1903

No. 13

These Sunday Lectures are distributed FREE OF CHARGE in the Temple to all who attend the Services.

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SUNDAY LECTURES

BEFORE

CONGREGATION RODEPH SHALOM.

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CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

SUNDAY, FEB. 1st.
10:30 a. m. Service
2:30 p. m. . . Religious School
4:00 p. m. . Children's Service
4:30 p. m. . Teachers' Meeting

TUESDAY, FEB. 3d.
2:30 p. m. . . Sewing Circle
4:30 p. m., Confirmation Class

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 4th.
4:00 p. m., . . . Bible Class

THURSDAY, FEB. 5th.
8:00 p. m., Current Topics Class

SATURDAY, FEB. 7th.
9:15 a. m., Confirmation Class
10:30 a. m. Service

Jewish Affirmations

III. THE HOLY BIBLE.

A SUNDAY LECTURE

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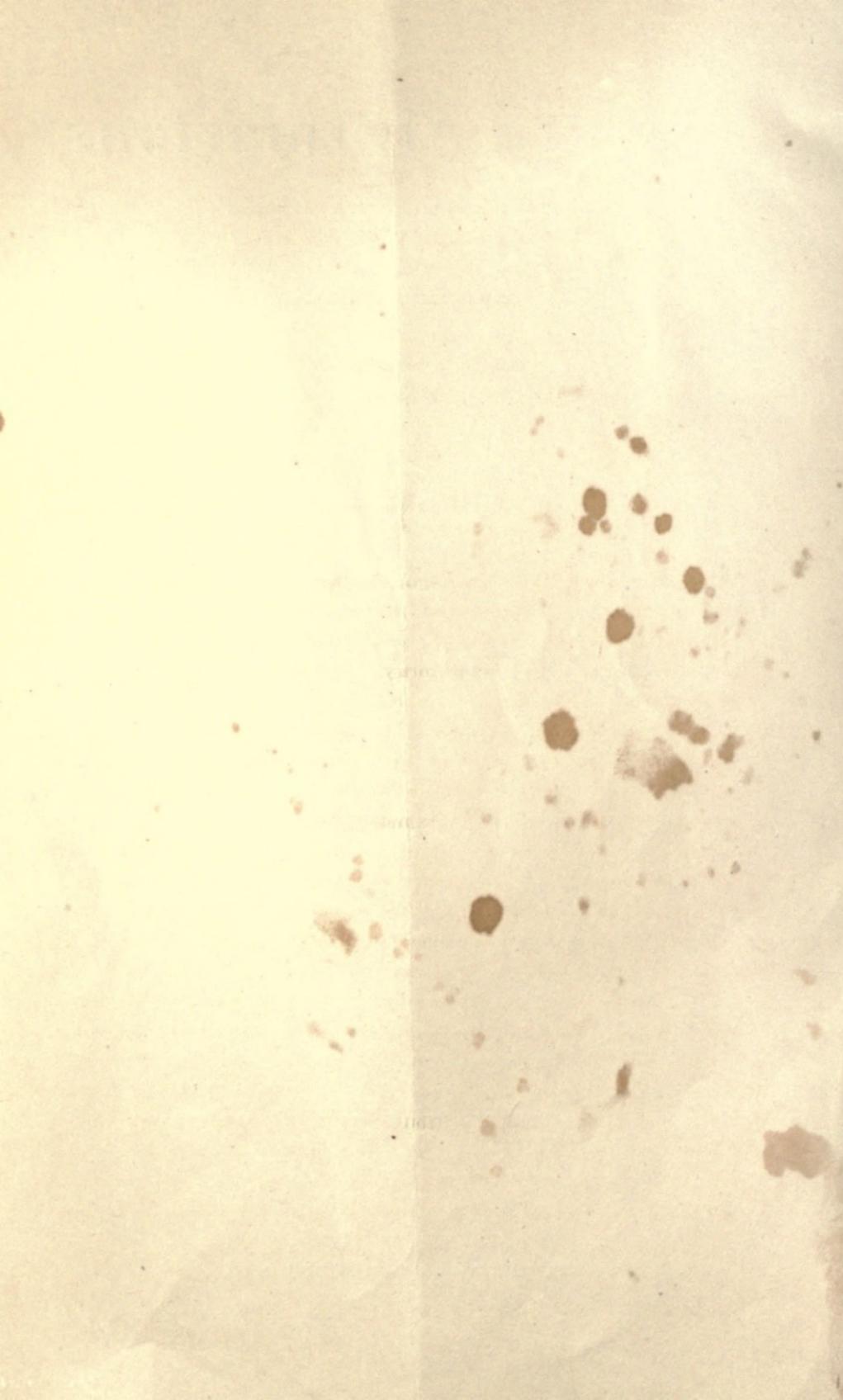
Congregation Rodeph Shalom

PITTSBURGH, PA.,

FEBRUARY 18TH, 1903

BY

RABBI J. LEONARD LEVY, D. D.



JEWISH AFFIRMATIONS.*

III. THE HOLY BIBLE.

A SUNDAY LECTURE

BEFORE

CONGREGATION RODEPH SHALOM,

BY

RABBI J. LEONARD LEVY, D. D

Pittsburg, January 18th, 1903.

SCRIPTURE READING, *Jeremiah xxxi, 31-37.*

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever. (Isaiah xl., 8.)

A little more than a year ago I chanced to be in Stratford-on-Avon, the birthplace of the immortal Shakespeare. Among the "sights" of that city which I visited was the building containing the Shakespearian picture-gallery, theater and library. Interesting as are the theater and gallery, the library is even more attractive. Thousands of volumes are placed upon its shelves, and each volume, so it is stated, has something to do with, or to say about, Shakespeare. There are many editions of the dramatist's works. There are numerous Shakespearian dictionaries, Shakespearian grammars, Shakespearian commentaries. There are countless essays, of every shade of opinion, many of them being controversial in character, including those which question the Shakespearian authorship of "The Works of William Shakespeare." Commentaries, textual criticisms, dictionaries, essays, grammars, illustrated editions, rare editions, variorum editions, and so forth, make up this splendid collection of thousands of volumes, amounting in all, I was told, to some thirty thousand books, more or less. The visitor cannot fail to be impressed by the fertility of the literary soil from which has grown so large a collection of works, and the great library cannot but be regarded as a tribute to the genius of Shakespeare.

If you are nobody, no one will worry about you. If you do nothing, you will hurt no one and no one will attack you. If you are obscure; if your light is hidden under a bushel; if you never step out of

*Stenographically reported by Caroline Loewenthal.

the beaten track; if you are content to hide your personality under the miserable aegis of fashion; if you bend your knee with acceptable grace before the Baal and Astarte, the popular idols, of your day; if you have no original idea; if you add in no way to the work going on around you, you will probably not be the cause of annoyance or a stumbling block to your neighbors. But, if, perchance, God has sent you to do something; if perchance, you use your God-given reason; if perchance, you work and endeavor to lead others to work; if it is your fixed determination to be a someone; if you go out of the beaten path and old way; if you do something; if you attempt something; ah! then every cur will snarl at you and every human mosquito will try to bite you and every mean, contemptible being will have some criticism to offer about you. The moral of this is that most people usually determine to remain among the nobodies, for thus they get along without raising envy, jealousy, misapprehension and misconception. Should you dare attempt to be a somebody, you will find the shafts of criticism falling fast around you; you will find how exceedingly miserable life can be made for you if you care to notice "the slings and arrows of outrageous" criticism.

It may be well to remember these facts in considering the case of the Bible and the people who gave it to the world. If it be true that Shakespeare has been the source of inspiration to thousands of volumes, it is equally true that the Bible has inspired tens of thousands. I believe that I am thoroughly conservative when I say that hundreds of thousands of books are either inspired by it, directly or indirectly, or are, in someway or other, indebted to it for some one theme or more. A vast number of commentaries, dictionaries, grammars, encyclopedias, treatises, lectures, sermons, criticisms, essays of every kind, have appeared from time to time, the Bible being their inspiration. The Work itself has passed through edition after edition, until, as you have before heard, in the last century, conservatively estimated, five hundred million copies of it were circulated throughout the world. Such has been mankind's spontaneous recognition of the value of this product of the genius of the descendants of Abraham. Were the Bible a nothing, and were the claims made by the people of the Bible also nothing, both would have escaped detection. I take it that the controversies, the commentaries, the attacks on, as well as the friendship shown to the Scriptures and the people who wrote them, are the world's tribute to the high value placed upon the Book itself and upon the people of the Book.

It is necessary for me this morning in dealing with this subject

to speak about some very elementary matters; that is to say, elementary as far as the scholars of the world are concerned; but you will pardon me if I tell you that I feel certain that they are not elementary as far as most of us are concerned. Unfortunately, it is not the custom now-a-days to give serious attention to Bible criticism, and if there be any people ignorant of the Bible to a greater degree than they should be, I, to our shame, confess it is the Jew. It is his book. His people wrote it. It has been the inspiration of his fathers. For it they lived; for it they were the accursed of men; through it we are to be the blessed of men. And yet I verily believe that there is more ignorance of the Bible among Jewish people than among any other people who are permitted to investigate and to study and to search the Scriptures. Whatever the cause of this sad effect, there is no reason for its continuance to-day. We should strive to remove this reproach speedily and effectually.

You have always imagined that the Bible is a book. It is not a book; it is many books. You have always imagined that the original name of the Bible was "The Bible"; it was originally called in Greek "Ta Biblia," the books, and it was only called "The Bible" late in its history. In the fifth century of the present era these Books called "The Bible" were known as "the Books," in Hebrew *Sepharim*. Some called them *Miqra*, or The Reading. Nowhere was this work called the Bible, giving us the impression that it is a single book, until within comparatively recent times. The Bible, then, is not one, but many, books. Accepting for this morning the Christian arrangement of the work, we have in the Bible a series of sixty-six books; thirty-nine of them are called by Christians, the "Old Testament," twenty-seven, the "New Testament." I would not have you imagine that if I use the terms Old and New Testaments that I feel myself bound by this division. If I speak of the Old Testament as such, it is only because the term is so generally used that the use of the word Bible, as applied to the thirty-nine books of the Hebrew Bible, would lead to great confusion in public speaking, and very often in written documents.

This division, into Old and New, has been made because we are told in the words read to you from Jeremiah (xxxii., 31-37), this morning, that God promised to make "a new covenant" with the people of Israel; not the covenant He made with them at the time of the Exodus, but a covenant which He promised to write upon their hearts. I accept the statement of Jeremiah at its full value, for in as much as Israel had been faithless, God would inspire Israel to

be faithful, and when faithful to God, the spirit of the religion of Israel would be in the hearts of the people. It is, in the judgment of Jewish scholars, a false interpretation to put in the mouth of Jeremiah the assertion that several hundred years later on, God was going to make a new covenant which would give rise to another Bible, or at least to an addition to one not yet in existence, and which should, in many particulars, render many of the principles of the older Jewish work, nugatory and of no effect. Jeremiah's words, taken in their plainest significance, bear no reference to an abrogation of one covenant and the substitution of another. He simply promises that God will write "His Law," not a new one, but the one recognized already by Israel, in the hearts of the people, who should revere and follow it in the spirit of obedience and love. More than this Jeremiah does not say. He speaks also of the deathlessness of Israel if true to God's law, but not to some new dispensation, the existence of which would be as much of a surprise to Jeremiah as it is to his people.

No one is more willing than I to acknowledge the spiritual beauty of much that is in the twenty-seven books of the New Testament; but the claim we make is that the New Testament contains no new truth not already revealed to Israel in the Old, while that which is claimed to be new truth, in the sense that it is "the fulfillment" of the Old, we are forced to completely and absolutely reject. The Bible then is to be regarded not as *the book*, but as *the books*, the sixty-six books, if we consent to the Christian arrangement, or thirty-nine books if we accept only the Jewish division of this wonderful work. This is, as I said before, an elementary fact; for to-day the children of the Sabbath School are taught that the Bible is a little library all in itself and contains a number of books written by Jewish people. There was a time when people believed that the Bible was perfectly uniform throughout as far as its matter and method are concerned. There was a time when people believed in "the unity of the Scriptures;" when they held that a certain thought stated in Genesis, was carried uniformly through to Malachi; that then a blank period existed during which no authoritative works were written; and that finally the themes we find in the Old were uniformly carried on from Matthew to Revelation. Against any such general belief modern scholarship protests, and if this protest should disturb the reverent attitude of my Orthodox Jewish or Christian friends, we must not be halted by such considerations in the pursuit of truth. I hope that all here to-day are moved by the one desire to know the truth in this matter and that we will not permit our inherited prejudices,

our preconceived conclusions to force upon us that which the Bible in no place asks us to accept.

What is the Bible, then? It is, as I believe, the Magna Charta of human liberty. It is, as I believe, the great Declaration of Human Independence. It is, as I believe, the text-book on which modern society is built. Where it has gone and its spirit has been realized, the highest progress has followed. The so-called "Bible nations" stand foremost in the van of civilization. In spite of the ominous forecasts of its opponents, in spite of the abuse it has received from its enemies, and in spite of the wounds inflicted by the hands of its well-intentioned but foolish friends, it stands peerless as the world's religious classic. By its themes, all true government is maintained. I do not presume to teach for a moment that all the truth which man is capable of acquiring can be found in these books alone; but I do believe that all the truth necessary to aid any one in leading a peaceful, happy, good life can be found in these Scriptures. The trouble is that some have claimed too much, and have asked the world to accept too much with regard to the Bible, and there has, therefore, been a revulsion of feeling against it. Truthfully speaking, the Bible has been made the authority for more murders than have been committed by people in support of any other authority; more wrong has been consecrated by the Bible, through false interpretations, than by any other book or series of books. Slavery has been perpetuated in its name. Crime has been hallowed in its name. Families have been rent asunder in its name, and the divine right of kings has been supported in its name. In the name of the sacred Scriptures, in the name of the Holy Bible, fetters have been put on the hands of men, and chains have been placed about their feet. There is scarcely a wrong that has been perpetrated against unoffending man that has not gone to the Scriptures for its sanction.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that there has been no book given to man that has been able to effect so much for the general progress and prosperity of mankind. Three epoch-making events I attribute mainly to the influence of the same much-abused and oft misunderstood Scriptures. The Renaissance, the revival of learning in Europe after the downfall of Constantinople, when, as has been so well said, "Greece arose from the dead with the Bible in her hand"; when the spirit of philosophical investigation and ancient wisdom awoke, when science began to dawn and new knowledge began to spread throughout the Old World; this revival was largely brought about, as can be proven, by the aid and the influence of the Scriptures. The Refor-

mation, which was the key-note of modern progress, which meant the ultimate removal of absolutism; which marked the beginning of the recognition of the rights of the individual; which meant that human intelligence was to become a greater authority than that of any man sitting in the chair of governmental, philosophic, scientific or religious authority; this Reformation was superinduced by Martin Luther by a study of the Holy Scriptures. And last, and not least, since "time's greatest offspring is the last," this Republic was called into existence mainly as a result of Scripture investigation. When the Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth Rock, their choicest possession, their most sacred object was not the furniture they brought with them, was not the guns they carried with them, was not the arms with which they had brought wherewith to defend themselves against the attacks of animals and enemies. The sacred Scriptures was their most prized object. It was the light that had sent them from Europe to the wilds of this country, to go out as Moses demanded of the Pharaoh, "even unto the wilderness to serve God" and not man, to worship Him after the dictates of conscience, and not after the demands of the powerful majority. The Reformation, the Renaissance, and the Republic of the United States, I attribute primarily to the influence of the sacred Scriptures.

You may now, therefore, take your choice with regard to the value of the Bible. It looks at you as you look at it. If you come to the Scriptures for ammunition for attack, you can find it. If you go after phrases to build up modern skepticism, you can find them. If you search the Scriptures for themes for ridicule, you can find them. If you enter there to find that which shall arouse bitter antagonism, you may find it. But if you go to find the sources of spirituality, you shall also find them. If you go to find, so to speak, a devil, you shall find him. If you go to find a spiritual God, who loves righteousness, to whom justice is most dear, who wishes His children to seek equity, who wants mankind to be happy ,who confers blessing rather than curses, and who wants the wicked even to be as happy as their natures will permit them to be, you shall find Him in the Scriptures. If you want themes that shall inspire you to take up the sword of truth, to wage the holy warfare of right, and to seek the light, you shall find them here. "As you gaze on it, it looks at you. Smile on it, it smiles back. Frown on it, it frowns on you." Curl your lips in scorn, it will simply reflect your mental attitude.

The Bible is its own defense. In my judgment we need build up no theories about its inerrancy, or infallibility, or the peculiarity of its

inspiration. The Bible makes no claim anywhere that its contents are absolutely binding, in every particular, upon our conscience. Such a doctrine is unbiblical, nor do I see that it is necessary to put such a scaffold around it to support its remarkable value. The authority of the Bible is the Bible itself, and depends on the truth of its contents. I do not believe any sentences in the Bible to be true because they are in the Bible; I believe thy got into the Bible because they are true; and if I am unwilling to take, for example, the description of Aaron's garments and put them side by side with the noble utterances of the prophets, or the twenty-fourth psalm, and say they are all equally inspired, it is because reason has some demands that must be respected, and because the inspiration theory, nowhere claimed for the Bible by the Bible writers, is much misunderstood. When I read that Aaron wore a robe on which were placed a breastplate and a girdle, and which was ornamented with pomegranates and bells, I accept that very human statement for what it is worth. But when I read the prophet's words (Isaiah lvi., 1), "Thus saith the Lord, keep ye justice and do equity"; or when I read the Psalmist's utterance, (Psalm xxiv.), "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart," I realize that I am reading words of the highest religious and ethical importance. When I take these three statements and put them side by side, and I am told that I must accept all of them as being equally inspired and of equal spiritual value, then I am compelled, as so many people have done, to utterly reject the so-called "inspiration" theory of the Scriptures. The claim that the Bible is all holy has met with the equally false reply, it is all unholy. The claim that it has been given by God, from cover to cover, has led to the determination on the part of unbelievers that there is nothing in it given by God. The Bible has suffered more at the hands of its friends than ever at the hands of its enemies. For the satirist may smile, and the doubter may scoff, and the cynic may sneer, yet if there is truth in the Bible it will persist, despite the attacks of such enemies. But if you start with the proposition that everything in the Bible is true because in the Bible, you have at once harmed the cause of truth.

There is nothing that dies so hard a death as prejudice, as a pre-conceived conclusion. How many people stop to think to-day, as we are here this morning, that the earth is moving while the sun stands still? How many people think about it at any time? How many people realize it? You say the merest child knows that the earth is moving and the sun is still. I believe there are hundreds of millions

of people who have never heard this, and who would be prepared to gravely doubt you, were you to tell them that the earth is moving and the sun is standing still. Go to the benighted countries of the world! Go to China, India, Corea, Russia! Go to the wilds of Mexico! Go to the South American Republics and tell the people that it is the earth and not the sun that they see moving, and the reply would be, if any reply were made, "I see the sun on one side of my house in the morning; in the evening it is on the other side of my house; it is the sun which is moving, not the earth." Now, we believe that it is the earth that is moving and the sun is still, as far as the earth's position is concerned.

How long do you think it took to teach that? It has already taken over twenty-four hundred years to teach this, and it is very probable that one-half of the human race does not know it yet, while several hundred millions would not believe it if they were told it. Five hundred years before the common era, Pythagoras taught what is called the "heliocentric theory," that the sun is the center of a system, whilst the earth is a planet moving around it. This theory of Pythagoras was either laughed at or ignored, and for ages it escaped further attention. Some hundreds of years afterwards it was again taught by Archimedes, but was not received kindly. The Ptolemaic theory seemed more acceptable, and later on was generally received because it seemed to harmonize with the Scriptural opinion. In the Scriptures we are led to understand that the earth does not move; it was the sun that moved and was bidden by Joshua to stand still; therefore any man, who dared to teach that the earth moved, was deemed an infidel, a denier. The position taken by the Roman Catholic Church with regard to Arnold of Brescia, Bruno, Galileo and others, all of whom were either made to recant, were burnt or placed in dungeons, was based upon the truth (?) stated in Scripture, that the earth stood still while the sun moved. The opinions of the scientists were not allowed to become current knowledge, for if they did, the Scriptures, it was feared, would fall if the scientists' opinions could be maintained.

So it is with regard to the Bible. We have been told that the Bible is inspired; that the Bible is infallible. I believe the Bible is inspired; I do not believe the Bible is infallible. If you mean by inspiration that some men have received some truths of a spiritual, moral and intellectual character denied to other men, and have been given the opportunity to interpret the laws and workings of nature as other men have not been, then I agree with you on the subject of in-

spiration. But if you think that inspiration means, as many do, that God dictated into the ear of men certain words, and that while under the influence of that dictation they wrote down what God told them, then I do not agree with you on the subject of inspiration. I cannot tell you what inspiration is, but I can tell you what I think inspiration is not. I think that inspiration does not mean that Moses carved on the stone while God spoke to him. I think that inspiration does not mean that Isaiah tuned his harp with the plectrum of prophecy and that God uttered words which he heard and spoke forth. I do not believe that inspiration means speaking or writing under the direct dictation of God Himself. I do not believe that God used any man's body, or any part of any man's body, and so controlled it, that the individual, whether he would or whether he would not, had to write what God forced him to write.

If, however, you mean by inspiration the act of conscience which forced a Moses to recognize the appeal of justice, which compelled an Isaiah to lift up his voice and speak to his people the message of comfort and hope; if you mean by inspiration that characteristic which prompted the Nazarene to go to his people in the spirit of his brethren, the Prophets, to interpret their religion in *their* spiritual sense; if you mean by inspiration that power which conceived the Parthenon, or led a Praxiteles to carve a statue so that to the latest ages it should inspire sweet sentiment and a love of beauty; if you mean by inspiration that power which made Beethoven, though deaf, hear heavenly melodies, which he transcribed by the power of his genius; if you mean by inspiration the power that endowed a Michael Angelo to carve his Moses, a Raffael to paint his Sistine Madonna; if you mean by inspiration that rugged energy, that sense of conscience that made a Luther willing to die for his convictions, then I, too, mean that. Inspiration has always existed, and always will exist. Think not that Palestine was sacred to inspiration and that outside of it there was none. Think not that inspiration was sacred to our one Bible, and that outside of our Bible there is no inspiration. The influence of God can stir men, how we know not, but can stir them anywhere and at any time to perform His will. That conception of "inspiration," then, which would have us believe that every chapter, every line, every word, every letter, every vowel point of the "Old" Scriptures, and every Greek character of the "New" were written under the direct dictation of God, we are compelled to reject; but "inspiration," which means the product of human genius dedicated to the Highest, in all lands, in all ages and among all people, this we accept.

When it comes to the "Infallibility" of the Bible, we reject the doctrine altogether. The Bible is a fallible Book; it is the work of man. It is the product of man's views about God, the yearning of man after God. The Bible nowhere, as far as the Old Testament is concerned, makes the claim that it is infallible. It nowhere states that every word in the Old Testament, or that every utterance contained in it, must be accepted as eternally binding on the conscience of mankind, or of the Jew, as the unerring and absolutely correct word of God. As far as the New Testament is concerned, I take it that if I can show you in an authorized version of the New Testament one sentence which is left out in another authorized edition of the same New Testament, because it is agreed that the sentence is a forgery, and is, therefore, spurious, I think you will admit that its so-called "infallibility" is seriously impaired. The Bible first appeared in England as an authorized translation in 1611; it again appeared in an authorized translation in 1885, as the Revised Version. If it were infallible in 1611 how can anyone dare to omit from the version of 1885 one word, much less one important sentence, yea, one of the most important from the standpoint of Christian theology? Yet this has been done in the case of the "Epistle of John," in which we read in the Authorized Version of 1611 (I. John v., 7), "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." This appeared in the 1611 edition of the New Testament. In the 1885 edition of the New Testament, the first Epistle of John, chapter v., verse 7, reads, "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth." This quotation is found as part of verse 6 in the Authorized Version of 1611, but is made to read as verse 7 in the Revised Version of 1885, while verse 7 of the Authorized Version is omitted altogether in the Revised Version. If the 1611 edition of the Bible is infallible, why may the 1885 edition omit a passage referring so clearly to the doctrine of the Trinity? I am told that the sentence is omitted because it is admitted to be spurious, having found its way into the text by error. If this be so, how are we to tell what is spurious and what is not spurious? I can understand how, in a human document, there can be found much that is spurious, but how forgeries or spurious sentences can find their way into a document dictated by God is more than I am able to understand, and, I think, is more than can be successfully explained.

As far as the Old Testament is concerned, we have no worry. It nowhere makes the claim that it is the absolutely inspired word of God. We find in Isaiah's statement quoted at the beginning of this ad-

dress, "the word of our God shall stand forever." But that phrase, "the word of our God," is not what theologians to-day mean when they speak of "the Word of God." The "Word of God" as used by theologians is taken to mean The Scriptures; but the "word of God" as used in the Old Testament means "Eternal Law," or "The Truth," and nothing more. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but 'the truth' shall stand forever," is the plain meaning of Isaiah's prophecy. Some may say that I am juggling with texts, but nothing is further from my mind. Nothing can be clearer than that the "Word of God" as used in the Old Testament cannot refer to the Bible, which was not in existence when Isaiah, for example, made the statement just quoted. If further proof were needed we might cite that sublime passage from the Psalms (xxxiii., 6.) "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made." Surely no one can imagine that "the word of the Lord," here referred to, can mean the Bible, or anything but "the Eternal Law!"

It is not we who are to blame for such misconceptions, but you, oh, ye literalists! A word, a phrase, a sentence is pounced upon, without regard to its connection in a chapter, without respect to its most transparent meaning, without consideration for the circumstances of the time and place of its utterance, and upon it the most abstruse theories are built up. Texts, many of them incorrectly translated, are made the foundation of dogmas, with which their writers were totally unfamiliar, and of creeds which would have been utterly repudiated by the Old Testament authors. Oh, ye literalists! Why is the world not emphatically informed that the headlines to be found in English translations of the Bible are not to be found in the original documents? Why are not the people most clearly taught that the headings of each chapter do not exist in the original documents? We are accused of a lack of spirituality! We are told that we cling to the letter of the text! We are charged with being wedded to the form and opposed to the spirit! Is not the reverse the truth? Is it not you, ye literalists, who cling to texts on which you build mystery upon mystery and dogma on dogma, "a little here and a little there," when no mystery, no dogma was ever intended? When, oh, ye literalists, you have mastered the elements of Hebrew grammar, when you can translate every word of the Scriptures correctly, when you can account for the value of every vowel point and every musical note to be found in the text of the Bible, when you can quote the whole of the Old in Hebrew, and repeat all of the New in Greek, it must be remembered that a people's consciousness stands for something, a people's literature means more than microscopic searching of texts

and that the spirit of truth can never be contrary to human reason, though it may often seem beyond it! "Search the Scriptures," is sound advice. "Ponder on the Bible, ponder on it," taught the Rabbis, "for everything is in it." And so I repeat, "Ponder! Ponder! Search! Search! Study! Study! .And when we have pondered, searched and studied we shall find that the Bible is not one uniform book, divinely inspired, absolutely correct and totally infallible, but that throughout it bears the distinct marks of man's seeking God and not of God trying to find out about man.

The Bible finds its authority in, and is worthy of our reverence for, this: it was the first book which gave mankind a revelation of a God who loves justice and who demands righteousness. It is the first Book in the history of the world which taught mankind that we could please God, not by prayer, not by sacrifices, not by rites, not by ceremonies. The men of olden times believed, as so many do to this day, that by creeds and ceremonies, by dogmas and forms, they could worship God. But the prophets came and taught that mercy is more than sacrifices; to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly before God is more than all the fat of rams. But there are those who tell me that there is a book containing a new command, "Love ye one another." New, perhaps, this was to the pagan world, as it is new to this day, for it does not seem to have been worn out by frequent use, in any age. But as a command it was not "new" to Israel. The sympathetic reader of the Old Testament finds that almost from the first page of the Bible, on which God is reported to have created the heavens and the earth by His will, down to the very last page, God is represented as wishing His children to live together in peace and love, in the pursuit of justice, in the performance of equity, rather than in any other way. The Bible must stand or fall because of its intrinsic value, without being supported by the doctrines of inspiration and infallibility. The Bible can stand any human test because it was, and is, the great Work which teaches man that revelation of God who wanted holiness and did not ask for orgies wherewith He might be worshipped. The Bible furthermore tells us that God, the spiritual Creator of the Universe, is best served by man, when man serves his fellowmen and that the highest praise and the highest tribute that we can offer to God is not the bended knee, is not the eloquent prayer, but is the brotherly love, the doing of justice and performance of deeds of mercy toward all men.

The Bible has its claim upon mankind as being the text book of optimism. From beginning to end, it teaches that we should not repine, that we should not be sad, that we should not hang our head

in gloom, but that "ever upward, ever onward, shall be our motto be." Whether it was in Palestine, in Egypt, in Babylon, in Assyria, in Rome, whether it was in Spain, or Germany, in Austria, or in Roumania of to-day, it came to those, who have given the Scriptures, with the hope that the present evil would pass away and that if Israel would only be true to Israel's God, the great mission of Israel would succeed. And therefore Israel was not only the people of the Scriptures, Israel was not only the theme of the Scriptures, Israel was not only the preacher of the Scriptures, but whenever Israel should be faithful, Israel should become the Messiah promised by the Scriptures. Therefore we look, not backward, but forward; not behind, but ahead. Man has not yet attained to what he yet shall be; he has not achieved what he can yet do. This is one of the sublimest themes of the Bible, it is the source of the high hope that the human family will some day attain to the great dignity of true manhood.

The Bible is the best text book of biography we know. Its lives of holy men, the errors committed by even the saintliest and the good accomplished by its noblest heroes and heroines, have been the stories which have been repeated since the childhood of the world down to this day. And to this day the child will listen, with lisping wonder, when it hears of Abraham, the friend of God, of Moses, the servant of God, of David, the strong but weak king, of Ahab the wicked, of Elijah the fiery prophet of God, of Isaiah the inspired, of Jeremiah, the man of sorrows, of Ezekiel, the man of visions. To this day, if only properly interpreted, the child loves to hear of the moral courage of an Amos, who, in the palmy days of Judea, dared to promise its downfall if justice and equity were not pursued; of a Hosea, who, in his sorrow and affliction, brought to the faithless people a promise of forgiveness by the God of Love, if they would only hearken to His precepts and obey His law. And as for the Psalms, they have become, wondrous book! the liturgy of the world! The civilized world reverences them, sings them from childhood to old age, in the hour of success as in the hour of defeat. In the hour of triumph as in the hour of death, there is not a human experience that is not touched upon by the Psalter of the sweet singers of Israel.

But the Bible's greatest value is its universality. In its books there is a message, not for Palestine of old, but for Pittsburg of to-day, for America of to-day, even this message: "Thus saith the Lord, keep ye justice and do equity, for the man that doeth this is my delight, saith the Lord." The Bible is the Book of childhood; it is the Book of youth; it is the Book of age; it is the Book of life; it is

the Book of after-life. It is the Book which has built nations. It is the Book that has told nations that unless they love righteousness, they must fall. It is the Book that has produced the world's greatest word in the hope of burning it into the conscience and consciousness of mankind. This great word, "Righteousness," in Hebrew means first, "charity," and it also means "justice;" and as has been suggested to me by Mr. Markham, the author of "The Man With the Hoe," this word, which is the theme taught by Israel, means "affectionate justice;" justice tinged with affection, justice heightened by a sense of love.

Behold the Books! We must study them, we must know them, for they make clear why we live as members of the house of Israel, they explain the reasons of Israel's spiritual power, they can make of us immortals like themselves, if we are true to them, as they make us the rejected and the despised if we are faithless to it. Let us confess that much as we revere the Bible, as much as we love it, it is the work of man. If we put gold and alloy together in a coin, we have not cheapened the value of the gold, but it is absurd to say that the alloy is gold. Now, the Bible is a great mine in which we find gold and rock and soil and it is well that we should assay it and stand by the highest and best that is in it. Some fear that by such a rational attitude the cause of religion will be harmed. Reason is ever religion's friend, never its enemy. We have no reason to fear that because Mr. Marconi has established his wireless telegraph, that, therefore, electricity is going to be harmed. Because, to-day, we have learned what chemistry means, it does not necessarily follow that the elements of nature are going to be upset; and because we know to-day what astronomy is, and because we know that the old teaching of astrology is false, it does not follow that the stars are going to fall from their positions in space! Neither does it mean that because we apply to the Bible, the spiritual treasury of Israel, the divine power of criticism, that, therefore, the Bible will fall, and religion will be harmed. On the contrary; it is as true to-day as when Isaiah first proclaimed his great spiritual truth, that it is the grass that withereth, the flower that fadeth, the grass of "human infallibility" withers and even the flower of "human inerrant inspiration" fades; but as for "the word of our God," the truth, that shall stand forever.



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